

Facts About Skin Cancer

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What You Should Know

- Skin cancer is the most common of all cancers, accounting for nearly half of all cancer cases. When diagnosed early, skin cancer is highly curable.¹
- The best way to lower the risk of skin cancer is to limit exposure to the sun (and other sources of ultraviolet light), particularly during the midday hours when the sun is strongest.
 - ✓ When outdoors, wear long clothing and a hat.
 - ✓ For sun-exposed areas, use sunscreens with an SPF of 15 or higher and wear sunglasses that absorb 99 percent to 100 percent of ultraviolet rays.
- Protection is equally important during childhood, since severe sunburns in childhood may be associated with an increased risk of developing melanoma later in life.
- The American Cancer Society recommends having a cancer-related check-up periodically that includes an examination for skin cancer. Individuals should also practice skin self-exams regularly and report any changes in skin growths or the appearance of new growths to their physicians.

Risk Factors

- Factors that increase an individual's risk of developing skin cancer include:
 - ✓ excessive exposure to sunlight and other forms of ultraviolet radiation;
 - ✓ fair complexion;
 - ✓ occupational exposure to coal tar, pitch, creosote, arsenic, or radium;
 - ✓ family history of skin cancer; and
 - ✓ multiple or atypical nevi (moles).¹
- Caucasians are 20 times more likely than African Americans to develop non-melanoma skin cancer (cancer developing from either the upper or lower part of the epidermis) and 10 times more likely to develop melanoma (cancer developing from the skin cells that produce pigmentation).¹
- Men are twice as likely as women to have basal cell cancers and three times as likely to have squamous cell cancers of the skin.¹

Incidence and Mortality (Non-Melanoma Skin Cancer)

- More than one million cases of non-melanoma skin cancer are diagnosed in the United States each year.¹
- Nationwide, there are expected to be approximately 2,200 deaths from non-melanoma skin cancer during 2003.¹
- The five-year survival rate is greater than 99 percent for people with basal cell carcinoma (beginning in the lowest layer of the epidermis) and greater than 95 percent for people with squamous cell carcinoma (beginning in the upper part of the epidermis).¹

Incidence and Mortality (Melanoma)

- The most serious form of skin cancer is melanoma. Experts expect approximately 54,200 Americans will be diagnosed with melanoma during 2003.¹
- Since the 1970s, the national incidence rate of melanoma has more than doubled, rising from 6.8 cases per 100,000 individuals during 1973 to 17.7 cases per 100,000 individuals during 2000.¹
- Experts predict that during 2003, nearly 7,600 individuals in the United States will die from melanoma.¹
- During 2000, 1,673 Michigan men and women were newly diagnosed with melanoma.²
- During 2001, 206 residents of the state died from melanoma.³
- Michigan men are 57 percent more likely than Michigan women to be diagnosed with melanoma. They are 142 percent more likely than Michigan women to die from the disease.^{2,3}

Stage at Diagnosis

- During 2000, 76 percent of all newly diagnosed cases of melanoma in Michigan were detected at the localized stage.²
- Approximately 90 percent of people who are diagnosed with melanoma live at least five years. Early detection is important.
 - ✓ If the melanoma is detected while the cancer is still at a localized stage, the five-year survival rate is 96.7 percent.
 - ✓ If the melanoma is diagnosed when the cancer is at a distant stage (after it has spread to other organs), the five-year survival rate is 13.8 percent.⁴

References:

1. American Cancer Society
2. MDCH Cancer Registry, 2000
3. MDCH Division for Vital Records & Health Statistics, 2001
4. SEER Cancer Statistics Review, 1975-2000